Director of Security

11 January 1954

(318)

Chief, Special Security Division

LASHBROOK, Doctor Robert V.
#49818

1. On 28 December 1953, the Director of Security instructed the Chief, Cover Branch, SSD to set up employment backstopping on the above named individual so that an insurance investigation would not reveal his connection with CIA.

2. The above mentioned Subject was in the company of Mr. Frank R. Olson, SSD #30450, a Department of the Army employee who committed suicide in New York City during November 1953. At that time, certain information was given to the local police authorities and it is the desire of the Agency that Subject's connection with CIA not be revealed in any investigation arising out of the suicide of Olson. Olson's widow has filed a claim with her insurance company for double indemnity on a result of her husband's death. It is anticipated that this insurance company will make a complete investigation of the circumstances of the suicide and will probably attempt to interview Dr. Lashbrook and perhaps some of Olson's co-workers.

3. Dr. Lashbrook advised the New York City police that he was an associate of Olson. Olson was employed by the Department of the Army, Army Biological Center, Camp Detrick, Md.

4. Dr. Lashbrook was interviewed on 30 December 1953 by a representative of this Division regarding what backstopping was needed to fit in with the statement he had given the New York police. At that time, Dr. Lashbrook stated that he desired that backstopping be made to the Department of the Army, G-4, Research & Development Division, Development Branch with Col. Sjarmy Furuholmen and Lt. Col. Jackson Lawrence. These individuals are contacts of the Technical Services Staff of CIA. Dr. Lashbrook stated that he did not desire to be backstopped at Camp Detrick as he felt that that would only draw attention to the installation.

5. It is the opinion of this Division that backstopping in the manner suggested by Dr. Lashbrook would be inadequate and would only serve to arouse the curiosity of additional persons in the Department of the Army, who at this point, have no knowledge of the circumstances of the incident which occurred in New York.

SSD Chief	
Dep. Chief	
A. to Chief	
A. to Dep.	
M. [illegible]	[illegible]
Sp. A.	J
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[illegible]	[illegible]

6. Major General E. J. Sullivan, Commanding General, Chemical Corps, U. S. Army; Col. Vincent Ruvet, Commanding Officer, Army Biological Center, Camp Detrick, Maryland and Major [illegible], Security Officer, Camp Detrick, Maryland are all fully cognizant of the facts in this case.

7. The individuals mentioned in the above paragraph are all cleared for Top Secret liaison by the Security Control Staff of CIA.

8. It has been brought to the attention of this office that the U. S. Army is conducting an independent investigation into the circumstances of Dr. Olson's death and it can be presumed that the Army investigators have become aware of Dr. Lashbrook's clandestine relationship to CIA.

9. On the basis of this information, it is recommended that Dr. Lashbrook's employment be backstopped through the office of General Sullivan, Commanding General, Chemical Corps, U. S. Army.

10. It is further recommended that Col. Vincent Ruvet and Major [illegible], the Security Officer of Camp Detrick, Maryland be contacted and advised that any inquiry regarding Dr. Lashbrook should be referred directly to the office of General Sullivan and that the Security Office of CIA should be notified of the inquiry.

11. It is believed that this type backstopping is the simplest and most secure under the circumstances. Dr. Lashbrook's belief that to backstop him in any way with Camp Detrick, Maryland would call attention to that installation is not deemed sound as it is a natural thing for a chemist to be associated with an installation such as the Army Biological Center at Camp Detrick and that fact should not create undue interest. It is believed that backstopping through the Logistics Office of the Army would be inconsistent with Dr. Lashbrook's background and might create an undue interest insofar as an insurance investigation is concerned.

12. The Security Office, Technical Services staff advised a representative of this Division in confidence that he felt that the backstopping with CIA of the Army would not be compatible with Dr. Lashbrook's background. However, he had been requested by Dr. Lashbrook and Dr. Gottlieb of Technical Services Staff to offer this CIA contact of TSS as a possible backstopping medium.

13. If you concur in these arrangements, the Cover Branch of SSD will undertake to implement them on an expedite basis.

Robert H. Rumin [illegible]